Unit 5- Personality- Theory, Research and Assessment

General Psychology (Athabasca University)

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Unit 5: Personality- Theory, Research and Assessment

Defining Personality: Consistency and Distinctiveness

- The concept of personality is used to explain (1) the stability in a person's behavior over time and across situations (consistency) and (2) the behavioral differences among people reacting to the same situation (distinctiveness)
- **Personality**: refers to an individual's unique constellation of consistent behavioral traits.

Personality Traits: Dispositions and Dimensions

- **Personality trai**t: A durable disposition to behave in a particular way in a variety of situations.
    - Adjectives such as honest, dependable, moody, impulsive, suspicious, anxious, excitable, domineering and friendly describe dispositions that represent personality traits.
    - Most approaches to personality assume that some traits are more basic than others.
    - According to this notion, a small number of fundamental traits determine other, more superficial traits.
- **Raymond Cattell**: used statistical procedure of factor analysis to reduce a huge list of personality traits compiled by Gordon Allport to just 16 basic dimensions of personality.
- **Factor analysis**: in factor analysis, correlations among many variables are analyzed to identify closely related clusters of variables.
    - If the measurements of a number of variables (in this case, personality traits) correlate highly with one another, the assumption is that a single factor is influencing all of them.
    - It is used to identify these hidden factors.
    - In factor analysis of personality traits, these hidden factors are viewed as very basic, higher-order traits that determine less basic, more specific traits.
    - Based on factor analytic work, Cattell concluded that an individual's personality can be described completely by measuring just 16 traits.

The Five-Factor Model of Personality Traits

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- Based on factor analyses, most personality traits are derived from just 5 higher-order traits that have come to be known as the "big five:"
    - (1) Extraversion: People who score high in extraversion are characterized as outgoing, sociable, upbeat, friendly, assertive and gregarious. They also have a more positive outlook on life and are motivated to pursue social contact, intimacy, and interdependence
    - (2) Neuroticism: People who score high in neuroticism tend to be anxious, hostile, self-conscious, insecure, and vulnerable. They also tend to exhibit more impulsiveness and emotional instability than others.
    - (3) Openness to experience: Openness is associated with curiosity, flexibility, imaginativeness, intellectual pursuits, interests in new ideas, and unconventional attitudes. People who are high in openness also tend to be tolerant of ambiguity.
    - (4) Agreeableness: Those who score high in agreeableness tend to be sympathetic, trusting, cooperative, modest, and straightforward. Agreeableness is also correlated with empathy and helping behavior.
        - Negatively associated with income, especially among men.
    - (5) Conscientiousness: Conscientious people tend to be diligent, well-organized, punctual, and dependable. Conscientiousness is associated with strong self-discipline and the ability to regulate oneself effectively.
        - Higher grades correlate with higher conscientiousness.
- Correlations have been found between the big 5 traits and quite a variety of important life outcomes.
    - Extraversion and conscientiousness are positive predictors of occupational attainment, whereas neuroticism is a negative predictor.
    - The likelihood of divorce can also be predicted by personality traits because neuroticism elevates the probability of divorce, whereas agreeableness and conscientiousness reduce it.
    - Neuroticism is associated with an elevated prevalence of physical and mental disorders, whereas conscientiousness is correlated with the experience of less illness and with greater longevity.
- Traditionally, the study of personality has been dominated by "grand theories" that attempt to explain a great many facets of behavior
    - These include the behavioral approach, humanistic approach, and others.

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- According to **Delroy Paulhus**, the Dark Triad refers to a specific combination of 3 traits leading to negative, antisocial behavioral tendencies.
  - It consists of 3 separate but intercorrelated traits; ***machiavellianism, psychopathy, and narcissism***
  - According to Paulhus, the 3 traits characterize someone who has a "socially malevolent character with behavioral tendencies toward self-promotion, emotional coldness, duplicity, and aggressiveness.
  - Someone who scores high on psychopathy is someone who would be referred as a psychopath- someone who feels little empathy, who likes to control and hurt others, who is impulsive, and who often lives a parasitic lifestyle.
  - **Narcissism**: refers to a tendency to focus almost exclusively on the self and one's image, and to maintain an inflated view of the self and demand attention.
  - Machiavellianism: someone who enjoys and is good at manipulating others.
- Traits forming the Dark Triad represent the dark side to human personality.
  - Individuals displaying the personality type exhibit vengeful attitudes and show a tendency to engage in antisocial activities that harm others, such as exploring others sexually in short-term relationships, showing no empathy for the suffering of their victims, and often enjoy the physical/ emotional abuse they cause others.
- Paulhus recently added in a 4th trait, sadism- makes the Dark Tetrad.
- Sadism adds an additional type of negativity to the description of an evil personality- it involves an appetite for cruelty.

Personality Theories

- Divided into 4 broad groups that each share certain assumptions, emphases, and interests
- (1) Psychodynamic perspectives
- (2) Behavioral perspectives
- (3) Humanistic perspectives
- (4) Biological perspectives

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Psychodynamic Perspectives

- **Psychodynamic theories**: include all of the diverse theories descended from the work of **Sigmund Freud**, which focus on *unconscious mental forces.*
    - **Sigmund Freud** was a physician specializing in neurology when he began his practice in Vienna. He treated people troubled by nervous problems such as irrational fears, obsessions, and anxieties. Eventually he devoted himself to the treatment of mental disorders using an innovative procedure he developed called psychoanalysis.
    - Psychoanalysis required lengthy verbal interactions with patients, during which Freud probed into their lives.
    - Freud's psychoanalytic theory grew out of his decades of interactions with his clients. It attempts to explain personality by focusing on the influence of early childhood experiences, unconscious conflicts and sexual urges.
    - 3 issues that others seen in Freud's work:
        - (1) In arguing that people's behavior is governed by unconscious factors of which they are unaware, Freud made the disconcerting suggestion that individuals are not masters of their own minds.
        - (2) In claiming that adult personalities are shaped by childhood experiences and other factors beyond one's control, he suggested that people are not masters of their own destinies.
        - (3) By emphasizing the importance of how people cope with their sexual urges, he offended those who held the conservative, Victorian values of his time.

Structure of Personality

- Freud divided personality into 3 components: the id, the ego, and the superego. He saw a person's behavior as the outcome of interactions among these 3 components
- **ID**: the primitive instinctive component of personality that operates according to the pleasure principle.
    - Freud referred to the id as the reservoir of psychic energy.
    - By this he meant that the id houses the raw biological urges (to eat, sleep, defecate, copulate and so on) that energize human behavior.

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- The id operates according to the **pleasure principle**, which demands immediate gratification of its urges.
- The id engages in primary-processes thinking, which is primitive, illogical, irrational, and fantasy-oriented.

- **Ego**: is the decision-making component of personality that operates according to the reality principle.
  - The ego mediates between the id, with its forceful desires for immediate satisfaction, and the external social world, with its expectations and norms regarding suitable behavior.
  - The ego considers social realities- society's norms, etiquette, rules, and customs- in deciding how to behave.
  - The ego is guided by the **reality principle**, which seeks to delay gratification of the id's urges until appropriate outlets and situations can be found.
  - The ego often works to tame the unbridled desires of the id.
  - In the long run, the ego wants to maximize gratification, just as the id does. However, the ego engages in secondary-process thinking, which is relatively rational, realistic and oriented toward problem solving. Thus, the ego strives to avoid negative consequences from society and its representatives by behaving "properly." It also attempts to achieve long-range goals that sometimes require putting off gratification.
- **Superego**: the moral component of personality that incorporates social standards about what represents right and wrong.
  - Throughout their lives (but especially in childhood), people receive training about what constitutes good and bad behavior.
  - The superego emerges out of the ego at around 3-5 years of age.
  - In some people, the superego can become irrationally demanding in its striving for moral perfection.

_____figure 12.2_____

Levels of Awareness

- According to Freud, id, ego, and superego are distributed differently across 3 levels of awareness.

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- Freud contrasted the conscious with the preconscious, creating 3 levels of awareness.
- The **conscious** consists of whatever one is aware of at a particular time.
    - Ex. At this moment, your conscious may include the train of thought in this text and a dim awareness in the back of your mind that your eyes are getting tired and you're getting hungry.
- The **preconscious** contains material just beneath the surface of awareness that can easily be retrieved.
    - Ex. Your middle name, what you had for supper last night, or an argument you had with a friend yesterday.
- The **unconscious** contains thoughts, memories, and desires that are well below the surface of conscious awareness but that nonetheless exert great influence on behavior.
    - Ex. Forgotten trauma from childhood, hidden feelings of hostility toward a parent, and repressed sexual desires.
- Freud's conception of the mind is often compared to an iceberg that has most of its mass hidden beneath the water's surface.
    - He believed that the unconscious (mass below the surface) is much larger than the conscious or preconscious.
    - He proposed that the unconscious (mass below the surface) is much larger than the conscious or preconscious, and that the ego and superego operate at all three levels of awareness.
    - In contrast, the id is entirely unconscious, expressing its urges at a conscious level through the ego.
    - The id's desires for immediate satisfaction often trigger internal conflicts with the ego and super ego. These conflicts play a role in Freud's theory.

Conflict and the Tyranny of Sex and Aggression

- Freud assumed that behavior is the outcome of an ongoing series of internal conflicts.
- He saw internal battles between the id, ego, and superego as routine.
    - Because id wants to gratify its urges immediately, but the norms of society frequently dictate otherwise.

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- Ex. id might feel an urge to clobber a co-worker who constantly irritates you, but society frowns on this behavior so your ego would try to hold this urge in check. Hence, you would find yourself in conflict.

- Freud believed that people's lives are dominated by conflict. He asserted that individuals careen from one conflict to another.
- Freud believed that conflicts centring on sexual and aggressive impulses are especially likely to have far-reaching consequences.
  - Why did he emphasize sex and aggression? Two reasons..
  - First, he thought that sex and aggression are subject to more complex and ambiguous social motives. The norms governing sexual and aggressive behavior are subtle and people often get inconsistent messages about what's appropriate. Thus, Freud believed that these two drives are the source of much confusion.
  - Second, he noted that the sexual and aggressive drives are thwarted more regularly than other basic biological urges. If you are hungry/ thirsty you can head to a vending machine or a drink or snack. But if a department store clerk infuriates you, you aren't able to reach over and slug him. Likewise if you see a person who inspires lustful urges, you don't normally walk up and propose a hook up.
  - Freud ascribed great importance to these needs because social norms dictate that they be routinely frustrated.

_____figure 12.3_____

Anxiety and Defence Mechanisms

- Most internal conflicts are trivial and quickly resolved one way or another. Occasionally, a conflict will linger for days, months or even years, creating internal tension.
- More often than not, such prolonged and troublesome conflicts involve sexual and aggressive impulses that society wants to tame.
  - These conflicts are often played out entirely in the unconscious.
  - Although you maty not be aware of these unconscious battles, they can produce anxiety that slips to the surface of conscious awareness.
  - The anxiety can be attributed to your ego worrying about (1) the id getting out of control and doing something terrible that leads to severe negative

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consequences or (2) the superego getting out of control and making you feel guilty about a real or imaged transgression.

- The arousal of anxiety is a crucial event in Freud's theory of personality functioning.
- Anxiety is distressing, so people try to rid themselves of this unpleasant emotion. This effort to ward of anxiety often involves the use of defence mechanisms.
- **Defense mechanisms**: largely unconscious reactions that protect a person from unpleasant emotions such as anxiety and guilt.
    - Typically, they're mental manoeuvres that work through self-deception.
- **Rationalization**: creating a false but plausible excuses to justify unacceptable behavior.
    - Ex. after cheating someone in a business transaction, you might reduce your guilt by rationalizing that "everyone does it"
- According to **Delroy Paulhus**, repression is the "flagship in the psychoanalytic fleet of defense mechanisms"
    - Repression is the most basic and widely used defense mechanism.
- **Repression**: keeping distressing thoughts and feelings buried in the unconscious.
    - People tend to repress desires that make them feel guilty, conflicts that make them anxious, and memories that are painful.
    - Repression has been called "motivated forgetting."
- **Projection**: attributing one's own thoughts, feelings or motives to another.
    - Usually the thoughts one projects onto others are thoughts that would make one feel guilty.
    - Ex. If lusting for a coworker makes you feel guilty, you might attribute any latent sexual tension between the two of you to the other person's desire to seduce you.
- **Displacement**: diverting emotional feelings (usually anger) from their original source to a substitute target.
    - If your boss gives you a hard time at work and you come home and slam the door, scream at your spouse, you're displacing your anger onto irrelevant targets.
    - Social constraints often force people to hold back their anger, and they end up lashing out at the people they love most.

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- **Reaction formation**: behaving in a way that's exactly the opposite of one's true feelings.
    - Guilt about sexual desires often leads to reaction formation.
    - Ex. Freud theorized that many males who ridicule homosexuals are defending against their own latent homosexual impulses.
    - Tell tale sign of reaction formation is the exaggerated quality of the opposite behavior.
- **Regression**: a reversion to immature patterns of behavior.
    - When anxious about their self-worth, some adults respond with childish boasting and bragging (as opposed to subtle efforts to impress others)
    - Ex. A fired executive having difficulty finding a new job might start making ridiculous statements about his incomparable talents and achievements.
    - Such bragging is regressive when it's marked by massive exaggerations that virtually anyone can see through.
- **Identification**: bolstering self-esteem by forming an imaginary or real alliance with some person or group.
    - Youngsters often shore up precarious feelings of self-worth by identifying with rock stars, movie starts or famous athletes.
    - Adults may join exclusive country clubs or civic organizations as a means of identification.
- **Sublimation**: occurs when unconscious, unacceptable impulses are channeled into socially acceptable/ admirable behaviors.
    - Ex. intense aggressive impulses might be rechanneled by taking up boxing or football.
    - Freud believed that many creative endeavors, such as painting, poetry, and sculpture, were sublimations of sexual urges. For instance: he argued that Leonardo Davinci paining of Madonna figures was a sublimation of his longing for intimacy with his mother.
    - By definition, sublimation is regarded as a relatively healthy defense mechanism.
- Freud's work on defense mechanisms was important both to the development of pyschoanalysis and its legacy since it is one aspect of his theory that endures and has contemporary currency.

_____table 12.1_____

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Development: Psychosexual Stages

- Freud formulated a stage theory of development to make light of the early years as he made the assertion that the foundation of an individuals personality has been laid down by the age of 5.
- He emphasized how young children deal with their immature but powerful sexual urges (he used the term sexual in a general way to refer to many urges for physical pleasure).
- According to Freud, these sexual urges shift in focus as children progress from one stage of development to another.
- **Psychosexual stages (5)**: developmental periods with a characteristic sexual focus that leave their mark on adult personality.
- Freud theorized that each psychosexual stage has its own unique developmental challenges or tasks, and the way these challenges are handled shapes personality.
    - The process of fixation plays an important role in this process.
    - **Fixation**: a failure to move forward from one stage to another as expected.
    - Essentially, the child's development stalls for a while.
    - Fixation can be caused by excessive gratification of needs at a particular stage or by excessive frustrations of those needs.
    - Fixations left over from childhood affect adult personality.
    - Fixation leads to an overemphasis on the psychosexual needs prominent during the fixated stage.

1. **Oral Stage**

1. 1st year of life
2. The main source of erotic stimulation is the mouth (biting, sucking, chewing, and so on).
3. In Freud's view, the handling of the child's feeding experiences is crucial to subsequent development.
4. He attributed considerable important to the manner in which the child is weaned from the breast or the bottle.

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5. According to Freud, fixation at the oral stage could form the basis for obsessive eating or smoking later in life.

2. **Anal Stage**

- In their second year, children get their erotic pleasure from their bowel movements, through either the expulsion or retention of feces.
- The crucial event at this time is toilet training, which represents society's first systemic effort to regulate the child's biological urges.
- Severely punitive toilet training leads to a variety of possible outcomes
  - Ex. Excessive punishment might produce a latent feeling of hostility toward the training, usually the mother. This hostility might generalize to women as a class.
  - Another possibility is that heavy reliance on punitive measures could lead to an association between genital concerns and the anxiety that the punishment arouses. This general anxiety derived from severe toilet training could evolve into anxiety activities about sexual activities later in life.

3. **Phallic Stage**

- Around age 4, the genitals become the focus for the child's erotic energy, largely through self-stimulation.
- During this pivotal stage, the Oedipal complex emerges.
  - Little boys develop an erotically tinged preference for their mother. They also feel hostility toward their father, whom they view as a competitor for their mom's affection.
  - Similarly, little girls develop a special attachment to their father.
  - Around the same time, they learn that little boys have different genitals, and supposedly thei develop penis envy.
  - According to Freud, young girls feel hostile toward their mother because they blame her for their anatomical "deficiency"
- **Oedipal complex**: children manifest erotically tinged desires for their opposite sex parent, accompanied by feelings of hostility toward their same sex parent.

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- according to Freud, the way parents and children deal with the sexual and aggressive conflicts inherent in the Oedipal complex is of paramount importance.
- The child has to resolve the Oedipal dilemma by purging the sexual longings for the opposite sex parents and by crushing the hostility felt toward the same sex parent.

4. **Latency and 5. Genital Stages**
   - From age 6-puberty, the child's sexuality is largely suppressed- it becomes latent.
   - Important events during this latency stage center on expanding social contacts beyond the immediate family.
   - With puberty, the child progresses into the genital stage.
   - Sexual urges reappear and focus on the genitals once again. At this point, sexual energy is normally channeled toward peers of the other sex, rather than toward oneself as in the phallic stage.
   - Believes that the foundation for adult personality has been solidly entrenched by this time. He maintained that future developments are rooted in early, formative experiences and that significant conflicts in later years are replays of crises from childhood.
   - Freud believed that unconscious sexual conflicts rooted in childhood experiences cause most personality disturbances.
   - His steadfast belief in the psychosexual origins of psychological disorders eventually led to bitter theoretical disputes with two of his most brilliant colleagues, **Carl Jung** and **Alfred Adler**.
     - Jung and Adler both argued that Freud overemphasized sexuality.
     - Freud rejected their ideas and the other two theorists felt compelled to go their own way and developed their own theories of personality.

___table 12,2_____

Jung's Analytical Psychology

- **Carl Jung** called his new approach analytic psychology to differentiate it from Freud's psychoanalytic theory.

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- Like Freud, Jung emphasized the unconscious determinants of personality. However, he proposed that the unconscious consists of two layers.
    - (1) **Personal unconscious**: essentially the same as Freud's version of the unconscious.
        - Houses material that is not within one's conscious awareness because it has been repressed or forgotten.
        - Also, Jung theorized the existence of a deeper layer that he called the collective unconscious.
    - (2) **Collective unconscious**: a deeper layer that is a storehouse of latent memory traces inherited from people's ancestral past. According to Jung, each person shares the collective unconscious with the entire human race.
    - Jung called these ancestral memories **archetypes**. They are not memories of actual, personal experiences.
        - Instead, they are emotionally charged images and thought forms that have universal meaning.
        - These archetypal images and ideas show up frequently in dreams and often manifested in a culture's use of symbols in art, literature, and religion.
        - According to Jung, symbols from different cultures often show striking similarities because they emerge from archetypes that are shared by the entire human race.
            - Ex. Jung found numerous cultures in which the mandala or "magic circle: has served as a symbol of the unified wholeness of the self.
            - Jung felt that an understanding of archetypal symbols helped him make sense of his patients dreams. He thought that dreams contain important messages from the unconscious, and like Freud, depended extensively on dream analysis in his treatment of patients.

_____figure 12.4_____

Adler's Individual Psychology

- **Alfred Adler** developed his own approach to personality, individual psychology.

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- Like Jung, Adler argued that Freud had gone overboard in centring his theory on sexual conflicts.
- According to Adler, the foremost source of human motivation is a **striving for superiority**.
    - Adler saw striving for superiority as a universal drive to adapt, improve oneself and master life's challenges.
    - He noted that young children understandably feel weak and helpless in comparison with more competent older children and adults.
    - These early inferiority feelings supposedly motivate them to acquire new skills and develop new talents.
- Adler asserted that everyone has to work to overcome some feelings of inferiority. He called this process compensation.
- **Compensation**: involves efforts to overcome imagined or real inferiorities by developing one's abilities.
    - Adler believed that compensation is entirely normal.
    - However, in some people, inferiority feelings can become excessive, which can result in what is widely known as inferiority complex- exaggerated feelings of weakness and inadequacy.
    - Adler thought that either parental pampering or parental neglect could cause an inferiority complex. Thus, he agreed with Freud on the importance of early childhood experiences.
- Adler maintained that some people engage in overcompensation in order to conceal, even from themselves, their feelings of inferiority.
    - These people work to acquire status, power, and trappings of success to cover up their underlying inferiority complex.
    - Adler's theory stressed the social context of personality development.
        - Ex. it was Adler who first focused attention on the possible importance of birth order as a factor governing personality.
            - He noted that first born's, second children, and later born children enter varied home environments and are treated differently by parents and that these experiences are likely to affect their personality.

Evaluating Psychodynamic Perspectives

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- The psychodynamic approach has provided a number of far-reaching "grand" theories of personality.
- These theories yielded some of bold new insights when they were first presented.
- Research has demonstrated that:
    - (1) Unconscious forces can influence behavior.
    - (2) Internal conflict often plays a key role in generating psychological distress
    - (3) Early childhood experiences can have powerful influences on adult personality and,
    - (4) People do use defense mechanisms to reduce their experiences of unpleasant emotions.
- In addition to being praised, psychodynamic formulations have also been criticized on several grounds, including:
    - (1) Poor testability: scientific investigations require testable hypotheses.
        - Psychodynamic ideas have often been too vague and conjectural to permit a clear scientific test.
        - Ex. How would you prove or disprove the assertion that the id is entirely unconscious?
    - (2) Inadequate evidence: The empirical evidence on psychodynamic theories has often been characterized as "inadequate"
        - Psychodynamic theories depend too heavily on clinical case studies in which it's much too easy for clinicians to see what they expect to see. Re-examinations of Freud's own clinical work suggest that he frequently distorted his patient's case histories to make them mesh with his theory.
        - Insofar as researchers have accumulated evidence on psychodynamic theories, the evidence has provided only modest support for many of the central hypotheses.
    - (3) Sexism: many critics have argued that psychodynamic theories are characterized by a sexist bias against women.
        - Freud believed that females penis envy made them feel inferior to males.
        - He also thought that females tended to develop weaker superegos and to be more prone to neurosis than males.

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        - The sex bias in modern psychodynamic theories has been reduced considerably.
        - The psychodynamic approach has generally provided a male centered point of view.
        - Many psychoanalytic theorists provided compelling critiques of Freud's sexist ideas.
            - Ex. Karen Horney criticized his phallocentric bias and argued that he "misrepresented" the female experience. She also argued for the importance of culture in the development of personality. Onw of her most important critics of Freud's ideas had to do with the emphasis he placed in his theory on the central role played by infantile sexuality on personality development. Horney believed that the infants need for a sense of security was a more important factor.
    - (4) Unrepresentative samples: Freud's theories were based on an exceptionally narrow sample of upper class, neurotic, sexually repressed Viennese women. They were not even remotely representative of western European culture, let alone other cultures.

Behavioral Perspectives

- **Behaviourism:** a theoretical orientation based on the premise that scientific psychology should study only observable behavior.
    - Dollard and Miller showed that behavioral concepts could provide enlightening insights about the complicated subject of personality.
    - 3 behavioral views of personality which explain personality in the terms of learning.

Skinner's Ideas Applied to Personality

Personality Structure

- Skinner made no provision for internal personality structures similar to Freud's id, ego and super ego because such structures can't be observed.
- Skinner showed little interest in what goes on "inside" people. He argued that its useless to speculate about private, unobservable cognitive processes.
- Instead, he focused on how the external environment moulds overt behavior.

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- Argued that behavior is fully determined by environmental stimuli.
- Skinner said that people show some consistent patterns of behavior because they have some stable response tendencies that they have acquired through experience.
    - These response tendencies may change in the future as a result of new experiences, but they're enduring enough to create a certain degree of consistency in a person's behavior.
    - Skinner viewed an individuals personality as a collection of response tendencies that are tied to various stimulus situations.
        - A specific situation may be associated with a number of response tendencies that vary in strength, depending on past conditioning.

Personality Development as a Product of Conditioning

- Skinner's theory accounts for personality development by explaining how various response tendencies are acquired through learning.
- He believed that most human responses are shaped by the type of conditioning that he described: operant conditioning.
- Skinner maintained that environmental consequences- reinforcement, punishment, and extinction- determine people's patterns of responding.
    - On one hand when responses are followed by favorable consequences (reinforcement), they are strengthened.
        - Ex. If you're joking at a party pays off with favorable attention, your tendency to joke at parties will increase.
    - On the other hand, when responses lead to negative consequences (punishment), they are weakened. Thus, if your impulsive decisions always backfire, your tendency to be impulsive will decline.
- Because response tendencies are constantly being strengthened or weakened by new experiences, Skinner's theory views personality development as a continuous, lifelong journey.
- Unlike Freud and many other theorists, Skinner saw no reason to break the developmental process into stages, nor did he attribute special importance to early childhood experiences.
- Skinner believed that conditioning in humans operates much the same as in the rats and pigeons that he studied

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- He assumed that conditioning strengthens and weakens response tendencies "mechanically"- that is, without the person's conscious participation.
- Skinner was able to explain consistencies in behavior (personality) without being concerned about individuals cognitive processes.

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Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory

Cognitive Processes and Reciprocal Determinism

- Bandura along with a few others take issue with Skinner's "pure" behaviorism.
    - They point out that humans obviously are conscious, thinking, feeling beings.
    - These theorists argue that in neglecting cognitive processes, Skinner ignored the most distinctive and important feature of human behavior.
- Bandura and like-minded theorists originally called their modified brand of behaviorism social learning theory.
    - Today, Bandura refers to it as social cognitive theory.
- Bandura agrees with the fundamental thrust of behaviorism in that he believes that personality is largely shaped through learning.
    - However, he contends that conditioning is not a mechanical process in which people are passive participants.
    - Instead, he maintains that "people are self-organizing, proactive, self-reflecting, and self regulating, not just reactive organisms shaped and shepherded by external events"
    - Thus, people routinely attempt to influence their lives and their outcomes.
- Bandura also emphasizes the important role of forward-directed planning, noting that "people set goals for themselves, anticipate the likely consequences of prospective actions and select and create courses of action likely to produce desired outcomes and avoid detrimental ones.
- Compared to Skinner's highly deterministic view, Bandura advocates a position called **reciprocal determinism**.
    - According to this notion, the environment does determine behavior (as Skinner would argue)
    - However, behavior also determines the environment (in other words, people can act to alter their environment)

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- Moreover, personal factors (cognitive structures such as beliefs and experiences) determine and are determined by both behavior and the environment.
- Thus, reciprocal determinism is the idea that internal mental events, external environmental events and overt behavior all influence one another.
- According to bandura humans are neither masters of their own destiny now haples victims buffeted about by the environment. To some extent, people shape their environments.

12.7_____

Observational Learning

- Bandura's foremost theoretical contribution has been his description of observational learning.
- **Observational learning**: occurs when an organism's responding is influenced by the observation of others, who are called models.
  - According to Bandura, both classical and operant conditioning can occur vicariously when one person observes another's conditioning.
    - Ex. watching you sister get cheated by someone giving her a bad cheque for her stereo could strengthen your tendency to be suspicious of others.
- Bandura maintains that people's characteristic patterns of behavior are shaped by the models that they're exposed to.
- **Model**: a person whose behavior is observed by another.
  - At one time or another, everyone serves as a model for others.
- Some models are more influential than others.
  - Both children and adults tend to imitate people they like or respect more than people they don't

Self-Efficacy

- Self efficacy is emphasized as a factor (aspect of personality) that governs behavior
- **Self efficacy**: refers to one's beliefs about one's ability to perform behaviors that should lead to expected outcomes.
  - When self efficacy is high, individuals feel confident that they can execute the responses necessary to earn reinforcers.

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    - When self efficacy is low, individuals worry that the necessary responses may be beyond their abilities.
    - Perceptions of self efficacy are subjective and specific to certain kinds of tasks. Ex. you might feel extremely confident about your ability to handle difficult social situations but doubtful about your ability to handle academic challenges.
- Perceptions of self efficacy can influence which challenges people tackle and how well they perform.
- Studies have found that feelings of greater self efficacy are associated with greater success in giving up smoking, greater adherence to an exercise regime, better outcomes in substance abuse treatments, more success in coping with medical rehabilitation, reduced disability from problems with chronic pain, greater persistence and effort in academic performance, reduced vulnerability to anxiety and depression in childhood, less jealousy in romantic relationships etc etc.

Mischel and the Person-Situation Controversy

- Like Bandura, **Walter Mischel** is an advocate of social learning theory.
- His chief contribution to personality theory has been to focus attention on the extent to which situational factors govern behavior.
- According to Mischel, people make responses that they think will lead to reinforcement in the situation at hand. Ex. If you believe that hard work in your job will pay off by leading to raises and promotions, you'll be diligent and industrious. But if you think that hard work in your job is unlikely to be rewarded, you may behave in a lazy and irresponsible manner.
    - Thus, Mischel's version of social learning theory predicts that people will often behave differently in different situations. Ex. Someone who's been honest in one situation may be dishonest in another.
- Mischel's provocative ideas struck at the heart of the concept of personality, which assumes that people are reasonably consistent in their behavior.
    - His theories sparked a robust debate about the relative importance of the person as opposed to the situation in determining behavior.
    - This debate has led to a growing recognition that both the person and the situation are important determinants of behavior.

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        - When small chunks of behavior are examined on a moment-to-moment basis, situational factors dominate and most individuals behavior tends to be highly variable.
        - When larger chunks of typical behavior are examined, people tend to be reasonably consistent and personality traits prove to be more influential.
- **Norman Endler** was a well known advocate of an interactional approach to personality.
    - He argued that personality traits interact with situational factors to produce behavior.
    - So, in order to accurately predict how someone will behave, you not only need to know something about that person's standing on relevant personality traits, you also need information about the nature of the situational context he or she is facing.
    - Neither alone will allow you to accurately predict an individuals behavior.

Humanistic Perspectives

- Humanistic theory emerged as somewhat of a backlash against behavioral and psychodynamic theories.
    - Principle charge hurled at behavioral/ psychodynamic theories were that they are dehumanizing.
    - Freudian theory was criticized for its beliefs that behavior is dominated by primitive, animalistic drives.
    - Behaviorism was criticized for its preoccupation with animal research and for its mechanistic, fragmented view of personality.
    - Critics argued that both schools of thought are too deterministic and that both fail to recognize the unique qualities of human behavior.
- **Humanism**: a theoretical orientation that emphasizes the unique qualities of humans, especially their freedom and their potential for personal growth.
    - Humanistic psychologists don't believe that animal research can reveal anything of significant important about the human condition.
- In contrast to behavioral and psychodynamic theorists, humanistic theorists take an optimistic view of human nature. They assume that:

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    - (1) People can rise above their primitive animal heritage and control their biological urges
    - (2) People are largely conscious and rational beings who are not dominated by unconscious, irrational needs and conflicts.
- Humanistic theorists also maintain that a person's subjective view of the world is more important than objective reality.
    - According tot his notion, if you think that you're homely or bright or sociable, this belief will influence your behavior more than the realities more than the realities of how homely, bright or sociable you actually are.
    - Therefore, the humanists embrace the phenomenological approach.
    - **Phenomenological approach**: assumes that one has to appreciate individual's personal, subjective experiences to truly understand their behavior.

Roger's Person-Centred Theory

- **Carl Rogers** was one of the founders of the human potential movement.
    - This movement emphasized self-realization through sensitivity training, encounter groups and other exercises intended to foster personal growth.
- Rogers based his personality theory on his extensive therapeutic interactions with many clients.
    - Because of its emphasis on a person's subjective point of view, Rogers called it a person-centered theory.

The Self

- Rogers viewed personality structure in terms of just one construct. He called this construct the self, although its more widely known as the self concept.
- **Self concept**: a collection of beliefs about one's own nature, unique qualities and typical behavior.
    - Your self concept is your own mental picture of yourself. Its a collection of self perceptions.
    - Ex. a self concept might include beliefs such as "I'm easygoing" or "I'm sly and craft"
    - According to Rogers, individuals are aware of their self concept, it's not buried in their unconscious.

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- Rogers stressed the subjective nature of the self-concept.
- Your self concept may not be entirely consistent with your experiences.
    - Most people tend to distort their experiences to some extent to promote a relatively favorable self-concept..
    - Ex. you may believe that you're quite bright, but your grade transcripts might suggest otherwise.
- Rogers called the gap between self-concept and reality, incongruence.
- **Incongruence**: the degree of disparity between one's self-concept and one's actual experience.
    - In contrast, if a person's self-concept is reasonably accurate, it's said to be congruent with reality.
    - Everyone's experiences have some incongruence.
- Rogers maintained that too much incongruence undermines one's psychological well-being.

Development of the Self

- In terms of personality development, Rogers was concerned with how childhood experiences promote congruence or incongruence between one's self-concept and one's experience.
- According to Rogers, people have a strong need for affection, love and acceptance from others.
    - Early in life, parents provide most of this affection.
- Rogers maintained that some parents make their affection conditional, that is, it depends on the child's behaving well and living up to expectations.
    - When parental love seems conditional, children often block out of their self-concept those experiences that make them feel unworthy of love.
- Some parents make their affection unconditional... their children have less need to block out unworthy experiences because they've been assured that they're worthy of affection, no matter what they do.
- Hence, Rogers believed that unconditional love from parents fosters congruence and that conditional love fosters incongruence.
- He further theorized that if individuals grow up believing that affection from others is highly conditional, they will go on to distort more and more of their

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experiences in order to feel worthy of acceptance from a wider and wider array of people.

12.8_____

Anxiety and Defense

- According to Rogers, experiences that threaten people's personal views of themselves are the principle cause of troublesome anxiety.
- The more inaccurate your self-concept, the more likely you are to have experiences that clash with your self perceptions.
    - Thus, people with highly incongruent self concepts are especially likely to be plagued by recurrent anxiety.
- To ward of this anxiety, individuals often behave defensively in an effort to reinterpret their experience so that it appears consistent with their self-concept.
    - Thus, they ignore, deny, and twist reality to protect and perpetuate their self concept.

12.9_____

Recent Directions in Research on the Self

- Roger's work emphasized the importance of the self and has influenced contemporary psychology in terms of its views of the centrality of the self for understanding personality, and the implications of incongruence in the self system for dysfunctional emotions.
- Tory Higgins has extended Roger's ideas about self and congruence/ incongruence in developing his influential theory of self discrepancy between the actual self (our beliefs about the kid of person we think we are) and two standards we hold for the self (the ought self and the ideal self) can lead to emotional discomfort and even psychopathology if the discrepancy is extreme enough.
- The ideal self refers to our beliefs about the kind of person we wish to be our hopes, goals and aspirations for ourselves.
- The ought self refers to out beliefs about the kind of person we have a duty or obligation to be.
- According to Higgins, discrepancy between the actual and ought self leads to agitation and, in extreme cases, anxiety.

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- And discrepancies between the actual and idea selves lead to dejection, and, in extreme cases, depression.

Maslow's Theory of Self-Actualization

- Like Rogers, **Abraham Maslow** argued that psychology should take an optimistic view of human nature instead of dwelling on the causes of disorders.
- Maslow's key contributions were his analysis of how motives are organized hierarchically and his description of the healthy personality.

Hierarchy of Needs

- Maslow proposed that human motives are organized into **hierarchy of needs**- a systemic arrangement of needs, according to priority, in which basic needs must be met before less basic needs are aroused.
- Arranged in a pyramid shape- the needs toward the bottom of the pyramid such as physiological or security needs are the most basic.
    - Higher levels in the pyramid consist of progressively less basic needs.
    - When a person manages to satisfy a level of needs reasonably well (complete and satisfaction is not necessary), this satisfaction activates needs at the next level.
- Like Rogers, Maslow argued that humans have an innate drive toward personal growth.
    - Thus, he described the needs in the uppermost reaches of his hierarchy as growth needs. These include the needs for knowledge, understanding, order, and aesthetic beauty.
    - The **need for self-actualization**- which is the need to fulfill one's potential- is the highest need in Maslow's motivational hierarchy.

The Healthy Personality

- Because of his interest in self-actualization, Maslow set out to discover the nature of the healthy personality.
- According to Maslow, **self-actualizing persons** are people with exceptionally health personalities, marked by continued personal growth.
    - Maslow identified various traits characteristic of self-actualizing people.
    - Maslow found that self-actualizers are accurately tuned in to reality and that they're at peace with themselves.

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- He found that they're open and spontaneous and that they retain a fresh appreciation of the world around them.
- Socially, they're sensitive to other's needs and enjoy rewarding interpersonal relations.
- However, they're not dependent on others for approval or uncomfortable with solitude.
- They thrive on their work and they enjoy their sense of humor.
- Maslow also noted that they have "peak" experiences (profound emotional highs) more often than others
- He found they strike a nice balance between many polarities in personality (Ex. they can be both childlike and mature, both rational and intuitive, both conforming and rebellious)

12.10_____

Maslow's View of the Healthy Personality

- Humanistic theorists emphasize psychological health instead of maladjustment.
- Maslow's description of characteristics of self-actualizing people evokes a picture of the healthy personality.

_____Characteristic of self-actualizing people_____

Evaluating Humanistic Perspectives

- The humanistic approach deserves credit for making the self-concept an important construct in psychology.
- The insight that a person's subjective views may be more important than objective reality has also proven compelling.
- One could argue that the humanistic optimistic, health-oriented approach laid the foundation for the emergence of the positive psychology movement that is increasingly influential today.
- Critiques argue that
  - (1) Many aspects of humanistic theory are difficult to put to a scientific test
  - (2) Humanists have been unrealistically optimistic in their assumptions about human nature and their descriptions of the healthy personality
  - (3) More empirical research is needed to solidify the humanistic view.

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Biological Perspectives

Eysenck's Theory

- **Hans Eysenck** was one of Britain's most prominent psychologists
- He views personality structure as a hierarchy of traits, in which many superficial traits are derived from a smaller number of more basic traits, which are derived from a handful of fundamental higher-order traits.
- His studies suggest that all aspects of personality emerge from just three higher-order traits; extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism.
    - Extraversion involves being sociable, assertive, active and lively.
    - Neuroticism involves being anxious, tense, moody and low in self-esteem.
    - Psychoticism involves being egocentric, impulsive, cold, and antisocial.
    - Each of these traits is represented in the theory as a bipolar dimension, with the endpoints for each dimension as follows: extraversion-introversion, stability-neuroticism (instability), and psychoticism-self-control.
- According to Eysenck, "Personality is determined to a large extend by a person's genes."
- How is heredity linked to personality in Eysenck's model?
    - Through conditioning concepts borrowed from behavioral theory.
    - Eysenck theorizes that some people can be conditioned more readily than others because of differences in their physiological functioning
    - These variations in "conditionability" are assumed to influence the personality traits that people acquire through conditioning processes.
- Eysenck has shown interest in explaining variations in extraversion-introversion, the trait dimension first described years earlier by Carl Jung.
- He has proposed that introverts tend to have higher levels of physiological arousal, or perhaps "arousability" which makes them more easily conditioned than extraverts.
- According to Eysenck, people who condition easily acquire more conditioned inhibitions than others.
    - These inhibitions make them more bashful, tentative, and uneasy in social situations.
    - This social discomfort leads them to turn inward. Hence, they become introverted.

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Behavioral Genetics and Personality

- Recent research om behavioral genetics has provided impressive support for the idea that genetic blueprints shape the contours of an individual's personality.
    - Ex. in twin studies of the big 5 personality traits, identical twins were found to be much more similar than fraternal twins in all 5 traits. Even true when identical twins are reared in different homes.
    - Argues against the possibility that environmental factors (rather than heredity) could be responsible for identical twins' greater personality resemblance.
- Research on the heritability of personality has inadvertently turned up a surprisingly finding: shared family environment appears to have remarkably little impact on personality.
    - This unexpectant finding has been observed consistently in behavioral genetics research.
- There has been some controversy about reports linking genes to specific traits.
    - Genetic mapping techniques are beginning to permit investigators to look for associations between specific genes and aspects of behavior.
    - A number of studies have found a link between a specific dopamine-related gene and measures of extraversion, novelty seeking, and impulsivity, but many failures to replicate this association have also been reported.
    - A variety of studies have reported a link between serotonin-related gene and measures of neuroticism, but the results have been inconsistent.
        - Both of these links could be genuine, but difficult to replicate consistently because the correlation are very weak.
        - The ultimate problem s that specific personality traits may be influenced by hundreds, if not thousands, of genes, each of which may have a very tiny effect that is difficult to detect.

The Evolutionary Approach to Personality

- Evolutionary theorists assert that personality has a biological basis because natural selection has favored certain traits over human history.

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- Thus, evolutionary analyses focus on how various personality traits-and the ability to recognize these traits in other-have contributed to reproductive fitness in ancestral populations.
- **David Buss** argues that the big five personality traits stand out as important dimensions of personality across a variety of cultures because those traits have had significant adaptive implications.
    - Buss points out that humans historically have depended heavily on groups, which afford protection from predators or enemies, opportunities for sharing food, and a diverse array of benefits.
    - According to Buss, the big 5 emerge as fundamental dimensions of personality because humans have evolved special sensitivity to variations in the ability to bond with others (extraversion), the willingness to cooperate and collaborate (agreeableness), the tendency to be reliable and ethical (conscientiousness), the capacity to be an innovation problem solver (openness to experience), and the ability to handle stress (low neuroticism).
    - In a nutshell, Buss argues that the big five reflect the most important features of other's adaptive behavior over the course of evolutionary history.

Evaluating Biological Perspectives

- Researchers have compiled convincing evidence that biological factors help shape personality, and findings on the meagre effects of shared family environment have launched intriguing new approaches to the investigation of personality development.
- Critiques assert that (1) too much emphasis have been placed on heritability estimates, which vary depending on sampling and statistical procedures.
    - (2) Efforts to carve behavior into genetic and environmental components lead to artificial results. The effects of nature and nurture are twisted together in complication interactions that can't be separated cleanly.
        - Ex. A genetically influenced trait such as a young child's bad temperament might evoke a particular style of parenting. n essence, the child's genes have molded his or her environment. Thus, genetic and environmental influences on personality are not entirely independent.

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_____4 views of personality_____

Culture and Personality

- Studies have found that there is evidence of both continuity and variability across cultures in regards to if western personality constructs are relevant to other cultures.
- Research tentatively suggests that the basic dimensions of personality structure may be universal.
- On the other hand, some ross-cultural variability is seen when researchers compare the average trait scores of samples from various cultural groups.
    - Ex. In a study comparing 51 cultures, Brazilians scored relatively high in neuroticism, Australians in extraversion, Germans in openness to experience, Czechs in agreeableness and Malaysians in conscientiousness.
    - These findings suggest that there may be cultural differences on some personality traits.
- Studies found there was little or no relationship between perceptions of national character and actual trait scores for various cultures.
    - People's beliefs about national character, which often fuel cultural prejudices, turned out to be profoundly inaccurate stereotypes.
- Personality has often been studied in relation to the cultural syndromes of individualism versus collectivism which represents different value systems and world views.
- **Individualism**: involves putting personal goals ahead of group goals and defining one's identity in terms of personal attributes rather than group memberships.
- **Collectivism**: involves putting group goals ahead of personal goals and defining one's identity in terms of the groups one belongs (ex. one's family, tribe, work group etc)
- Research has shown that individualism and collectivism foster cultural disparities in self-enhancement.
- **Self-enhancement**: involves focusing on positive feedback from others, exaggerating one's strengths, and seeing oneself as above average.

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- These tendencies tend to be pervasive in individualistic cultures, but far less common in collectivist cultures, where the norm is to be more sensitive to negative feedback and to reflect on one's shortcomings.

Understanding Personality Assessment

- Personality tests can be helpful in(1) making clinical diagnoses of psychological disorders, (2) vocational counselling, (3) personnel selection in business and industry, and (4) measuring specific personality traits for research purposes.
- Personality tests can be divided into two broad categories: self report inventories and projective tests.

Self Report Inventories

- **Self report inventories**: personality tests that ask individuals to answer a series of questions about their characteristic behavior.
  - Self rating remain the gold standard for personality assessment.
  - 2 kinds of self-report scales (MMPI and NEO Personality inventory)
  - MMPI: most wide used. Designed to aid clinicians in diagnosis of psychological disorders. Measures 10 personality traits that when manifested to an extreme degree, are thought to be symptoms of disorders (ex. depression, paranoia, hysteria)
  - NEO Personality Inventory: designed to measure the big five traits: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness.
- Strengths of self-report inventories:
  - They can provide a more objective and more precise estimate of the person's assertiveness, one that is better grounded in extensive comparative data based on information provided by many other respondents.
- Weaknesses of self-report inventories:
  - Deliberate deception: some self-report inventories include many questions whose purpose is easy to figure out. This problem makes it possible for some respondents to intentionally fake particular personality traits. Some studies suggest that deliberate faking is a serious problem when personality

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scales are used to evaluate job applicants, but other studies suggest that the problem is not all that significant.

- Social desirability bias: Without realizing it, some people consistently respond to questions in ways that make them look good. The social desirability bias isn't a matter of deception so much as wishful thinking and it can distort test results to some degree.
- Response sets: A response se tis a systemic tendency to respond to test items in a particular way that is unrelated to the content of the items. For instance, some people call yea-sayers, tend to agree with every statement on a test

Projective Tests

- **Projective tests** ask participants to respond to vague, ambiguous stimuli in ways that may reveal the subject's needs, feelings, and personality traits.
- Proponents:
  - Assert that the tests have two unique strengths.
  - First they are not transparent to respondents (the subject doesn't know how the test provides information to the tester) Hence, it may be difficult for people to engage in intentional deception.
  - Second, the indirect approach used in these tests may make them especially sensitive to unconscious, latent features of personality.
- Against:
  - Projective tests tend to be plagued by inconsistent scoring, low reliability, inadequate test norms, cultural bias, and poor validity estimates.
  - They also assert that (contrary to advocates claims), projective tests are susceptible to some types of intentional deception (primarily, faking poor health)

Hindsight in Everyday Analyses of Personality

- **Hindsight bias**: the tendency to mold one's interpretation of the past to fit how events actually turned out. (Think of the example of two sisters- 1 frugal with money because they grew up poor and she learned how to be careful with money, and one who spends a lot of money because they grew up poor and she wants to enjoy money she has)

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